

Literature Review on the Influence of Economical Prices on Students' Ready-to-Eat Food Purchasing Decisions

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Abstract

Fast food is a popular food alternative for students because it is considered practical, affordable, and readily available. For students, price plays a crucial role in purchasing decisions, given their limited income and daily financial management needs. This study aims to explore the impact of price on students' purchasing decisions for fast food on campus. The approach used is quantitative, utilizing a literature review to interpret and construct the impact of price on students' purchasing decisions around campus. The research findings were obtained from international and national journal articles on the topic of prices and student consumption behavior. Data analysis was conducted using techniques such as content analysis to identify patterns and trends in the relationship between price and purchasing decisions. The study results indicate that price is the dominant factor influencing students' purchasing decisions. This research indicates that the more affordable the fast food is, the more likely students are to make a purchase.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The campus environment is a social space that not only serves as a center for academic activities but also develops as a dynamic hub for microeconomic activity. Various small businesses, particularly in the fast-food sector, grow and operate to meet the daily consumption needs of the academic community. Students, as the primary consumer group around campuses, have relatively unique consumption behavior characteristics compared to other community groups. In their daily lives, students tend to prioritize practicality, speed of preparation, and affordability when choosing food. Their busy study schedules, limited time, and the need to reduce expenses lead students to prefer simple food products that meet their basic needs. This phenomenon indicates that student consumption behavior is influenced not only by basic needs but also by various social factors and information circulating in their environment, including recommendations from friends or close friends, which are often considered before making a purchase (Yusuf et al., 2025). Decisions made by consumers and businesses are often influenced by the various information available and how individuals utilize that information to make choices (Gardi & Darmawan, 2022). Dissemination of information to the public also needs to pay attention to ethical aspects and applicable legal provisions so as not to cause negative impacts on other parties (Muhammad et al., 2023).

Furthermore, limited income is a significant factor influencing student consumption behavior. The majority of students still rely on financial support from their parents, while

others rely on income from relatively limited and uncertain part-time jobs. This situation results in students having lower purchasing power than other consumer groups, making them more sensitive to price changes. This price sensitivity is reflected in students' tendency to compare prices between sellers and choose products with what they perceive to be the most economical prices (Abbas et al., 2025). Price is often a primary consideration for consumers because it is directly related to their ability to afford a product (Darmawan, 2022). Under these conditions, price plays a crucial role in determining student purchasing decisions, particularly for simple, regularly consumed food products, such as fast food. The ability of business owners to adapt products and prices to consumer needs is a crucial factor in ensuring business survival amidst competition (Mardikaningsih et al., 2022).

Fast food remains a popular food option and is in demand among various segments of society, including students. The prevalence of fast food around campuses is inextricably linked to its practical, readily available, and readily available characteristics. The wide variety of products available also provides consumers with a wider choice in choosing products that best suit their needs (Margareta & Darmawan, 2025). Furthermore, fast food is known for its relatively affordable prices and a wide variety of side dishes, enabling it to meet consumers' preferences and financial capabilities. From a marketing perspective, affordable prices are often perceived as the primary value inherent in popular food products. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), price is one of the elements in a marketing mix that directly generates revenue for sellers and is also the most easily and quickly evaluated indicator of value by consumers. For consumers with limited purchasing power, such as students, price is often the first and primary consideration before deciding to purchase a product (Djaelani & Darmawan, 2021).

Essentially, purchasing decisions are formed through a series of interrelated psychological and behavioral processes, starting from the emergence of a need to the consumer's assessment after the transaction has been completed. Schiffman and Wisenblit (2019); Auliyah and Darmawan (2021) explain that purchasing decisions are based on the interaction between internal consumer factors, such as needs, motivation, and perceptions, and external factors, such as price, promotion, product quality, and availability. In marketing activities, promotions are often used by business actors to attract consumer attention to the products offered (Nahar et al., 2025). In the context of students, external factors such as affordable prices have a very significant influence because they are directly related to their financial capabilities. Under certain conditions, consumers can also make spontaneous purchases when the price is deemed appropriate to their ability (Darmawan & Gatheru, 2021). Prices that are considered economical not only reduce the perception of financial risk but also increase consumers' sense of security and psychological satisfaction in making purchases, thus encouraging repeat purchases. Every product marketed also has a responsibility for the safety and quality of the products offered to the public (Alfiyah et al., 2023; Aziz et al., 2023; Marsal et al., 2025).

Based on Kotler as quoted in Sanjaya (2017) there are several indicators of purchasing decisions including product purchases, namely the consumer process in deciding to shop for desired goods or services; brand procurement, namely shopping decisions based on product brand considerations; selection of purchasing channels, namely determining the place or distribution channel chosen by consumers before making a purchase; determining the time of purchase, namely the consumer's decision regarding when the purchase will be carried out in line with the planning that has been decided; and the number of purchases, namely the number of products decided to be purchased by

consumers. This shows that purchasing decisions are influenced by various considerations felt by consumers (Putri & Darmawan, 2023).

From the perspective of consumer behavior theory, economic prices can be understood as a representation of the concept of *value for money perceived* by consumers. Consumers' perceived value arises when they weigh the benefits received against the sacrifices or costs incurred. The benefits consumers perceive can influence their intention to reuse a product (Fahriza & Darmawan, 2025). For fast food products, the benefits perceived by students include satiety, practicality, ease of access, and suitability to local tastes. Meanwhile, the costs incurred are relatively low and affordable for most students. When these benefits are perceived as commensurate with, or even exceeding, the price paid, consumers are more likely to make positive and sustainable purchasing decisions. The perception of appropriate prices often encourages consumers to choose a particular place of purchase (Darmawan, 2023).

Various studies over the past decade have confirmed that price plays a significant role in determining purchasing decisions, particularly in the ready-to-eat culinary and beverage product segments. Research by Prasetyo and Widodo (2018) indicates that the alignment of pricing with consumer purchasing power has a substantial positive impact on fast food purchasing decisions among college students. The study found that college students tend to prioritize affordability over other factors in their daily food consumption. Similar findings were also presented by Sari and Handayani (2020), who stated that college students prefer affordable food products despite relatively simple menu variations and product presentations, as long as basic needs such as taste and satiety are met. This suggests that, in the context of routine consumption, the perception of affordable prices can outweigh brand, packaging, and product image factors. In addition to price, product image can also influence consumer interest in a product (Novita & Darmawan, 2024).

In addition to individual factors, environmental conditions also contribute to the role of price in influencing student purchasing decisions. Campus environments are generally filled with food vendors offering relatively homogeneous products, both in terms of variety and quality. This creates a high level of price competition among vendors. This competition encourages fast food vendors to set competitive prices to retain student interest, their primary consumers. Research by Utami and Nugroho (2021) demonstrates that price competition in campus environments causes customers to become more rational and selective in choosing food products, thus making affordable prices a key competitive advantage for small vendors. The government also plays a crucial role in overseeing products circulating in the community to ensure they meet safety and quality standards (Mustika et al., 2023; Noor et al., 2023).

However, students' perceptions of affordable prices are not always uniform. Price perceptions can be influenced by previous consumption experiences, income levels, spending patterns, and individual eating habits. However, in general, students as a social group demonstrate a relatively uniform tendency to prioritize affordability for daily consumption. Research by Lestari and Ramadhan (2022) revealed that the majority of students prefer affordable food for daily needs, while higher-priced foods are consumed only under certain circumstances, such as when receiving additional remittances or on special occasions. These findings indicate that affordable prices play a strategic role in shaping students' consumption patterns and spending priorities.

According to Kotler and Armstrong (2001), economic prices can be measured through several main indicators, namely price affordability that reflects consumers' ability to purchase products according to their financial conditions, price suitability with product

quality that represents the ratio between the quality of the product received and the price distributed, and price-benefit harmony, which reflects the proportionality between the set price and the utility perceived by consumers, are important dimensions in making purchasing decisions. In addition, competitive pricing strategies, which reflect the product's capability in maintaining market position through pricing mechanisms, serve as crucial indicators in the process of evaluating consumer purchasing decisions. This study aims to evaluate the impact of economic prices on students' decisions in purchasing fast food in the campus area, through examining aspects of affordability, price relevance to quality and benefits, and price competitiveness as determinants of their consumption behavior.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach through the method of *literature review* to comprehensively understand how affordable fast-food prices influence students' purchasing decisions around campus, by referring to various previous research results. According to Snyder (2019), a literature review is a systematic procedure that allows researchers to identify, evaluate, and synthesize previous research results to build a solid conceptual and theoretical foundation. The data sources in this study were national and international journal articles relevant to the topic of prices and purchasing decisions, specifically in the context of food products, student consumption behavior, and culinary micro-enterprises. Data collection was carried out in several stages, namely: literature searches using keywords including price, economical price, purchasing decisions, student consumer behavior, and food products; literature selection based on topic suitability, year of publication, and quality of scientific sources; and literature grouping based on research variables to facilitate the analysis process.

Content analysis (*content analysis*) was applied to identify patterns, concepts, and relationships between price-pricing and student purchasing decisions found in various previous studies. Elo and Kyngäs (2018) emphasized that content analysis allows for systematic interpretation of textual data, leading to significant conclusions. The research findings were synthesized to identify similarities, differences, and general trends. The validity and credibility of the data were maintained through cross-source analysis, reviewing research from reputable journals and different contexts, which minimized interpretation bias and strengthened academic validity. With this approach, this literature review provides a comprehensive understanding of the influence of price-pricing on students' fast food purchasing decisions on campus.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Economical pricing for ready-to-eat food products has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on students' purchasing decisions around campus. Students tend to prioritize price when choosing daily meals due to budget constraints and routine consumption needs. This phenomenon demonstrates the consistency of student consumer behavior in assessing price as an indicator of product value, directly influencing purchase intentions. This finding is supported by previous literature discussing the relationship between price and purchasing decisions, particularly for food products targeted at students and low-income consumers.

1. Ela Ristia Dewi (2017)

Ela Ristia Dewi's research focused on determining the role of price in influencing consumer purchasing decisions for Nasi Gendruwo in Sindujoyo, Gresik. This research was descriptive in nature, employing a quantitative approach, while data analysis was

conducted using multiple linear regression. The data analysis revealed that price has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions for Nasi Gendruwo in Sindujoyo, Gresik.

2. Alfiah and Nur Rismatul Muflikha (2022)

This research focuses on analyzing the extent to which price influences purchasing decisions for Samyang Noodles, both individually and collectively, among consumers in Prigen District. The subjects of the research were Samyang Noodle consumers in the area, with sampling being conducted using a random sampling technique. *Non-probability* sampling was used because the population size is not known with certainty. Respondents were selected through *purposive sampling* based on certain criteria, so that 60 respondents were obtained. In this study, a quantitative approach was applied with data obtained through a questionnaire. *Liked* Data analysis was conducted using multiple linear regression. The results demonstrate that price has a partial positive effect on purchasing decisions, while simultaneously having a significant effect on consumer purchasing decisions for Samyang Noodles in Prigen District.

3. Nur Zannah Harahap

This study aims to examine the extent to which price influences purchasing decisions for Mie Sedap brand instant noodles. The data used are primary data collected through questionnaires distributed to respondents, focusing on aspects of price, product quality, and promotion. This study also utilizes secondary data collected from various reference sources, ranging from books and scientific journals to magazines and online sources. The study involved 85 respondents, with data analysis conducted using the application of multiple linear regression methods with the help of SPSS software. The results of the study provide an understanding that price has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions for Mie Sedap among students at the University of North Sumatra's female dormitory.

4. Nur Aulia Agustina, Seno Sumowo and Bayu Wijayantini (2018)

This study aims to analyze the role of price, product quality, and brand image in influencing purchasing decisions. The subjects were consumers of Aloha brand bread residing in the Gunung Kidul housing complex in Jember. Respondents were selected using a questionnaire technique and *purposive sampling*, resulting in 60 individuals meeting the established criteria. The collected data was then processed using multiple linear regression analysis. The analysis revealed that price had a significant partial influence on purchasing decisions.

5. Vina Zhavira and Bambang Hadi Santoso (2025)

This study aims to examine the extent to which price influences consumer purchasing decisions at Nasi Kebuli Tarim Surabaya. The study was conducted using a quantitative and descriptive approach. The study population included all consumers who had ever purchased at the Nasi Kebuli Tarim Surabaya restaurant. The sample size was determined using the Lemeshow formula, with a total of 100 respondents. Data were obtained through questionnaires distributed to customers who had made purchases, then analyzed using simple linear regression to determine the effect of price on purchasing decisions. The analysis results indicate that price has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.

6. Believers (2024)

This research focuses on examining the development of nasi krawu sales, describing consumer characteristics, and exploring the factors that influence consumer

choice when purchasing Habbah Sufa nasi krawu in Gresik. Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 100 respondents selected using the method of *purposive sampling*. Data analysis was conducted using a descriptive approach and multiple linear regression, processed using SPSS software. The results provide insight into the importance of price overall in influencing consumer purchasing decisions.

7. Shinta Asih (2025)

In their research, the researchers aimed to examine the role of price in shaping consumer decisions when purchasing corn rice products, using a case study of customers at Warung Nasi Jagung Mak Siti Bandar. This study employed a quantitative approach through field research conducted directly at the food stall. Respondents were selected using a questionnaire and *accidental sampling*, resulting in 96 consumers as research samples. Data were collected using questionnaires filled out by respondents, then analyzed through classical assumption tests, multiple regression analysis, and hypothesis testing with the help of SPSS version 27 software. The results of the analysis provide an understanding that price has an influence on the decision to purchase corn rice products.

8. Abid Muhtarom, Evi Fitrotun and Ardiansyah Putra Pratama (2023)

This study aims to analyze the role of price in influencing purchasing decisions, with customer satisfaction playing a mediating role. A quantitative descriptive approach was applied to this study, with approximately 1,000 customers of Lamongan's Typical Foods being the research object. From this population, 92 respondents were selected as the research sample. The analysis results indicate that price has a positive influence on purchasing decisions, although this influence is not statistically significant.

9. Danny Kurniawan and Prihatini (2018)

This research by Danny Kurniawan and Prihatini aimed to determine the extent to which price influences consumer purchasing decisions for Sari Roti products in Semarang. The study involved 100 customers who had experience purchasing and consuming the product. Data were analyzed using correlation tests, simple regression, multiple regression, and classical assumption tests using SPSS. The findings demonstrate that price has a positive effect on purchasing decisions, both partially and simultaneously.

10. Siti Purnama Dewi, Hanisa Sismaya Lestari, Rahmat Taufiq Dwi Jatmika and Zuber (2025)

This study focused on analyzing the extent to which price influences consumer purchasing decisions at Warung Nasi Uwa Cianjur. The chosen approach was a quantitative one, with data collection using a questionnaire. From a total population of 835 consumers, 90 respondents were selected as the research sample. The data analysis revealed that price has a positive and significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions.

Table 1. Previous Research on the Influence of Price on Purchasing Decisions

Researchers	Research Location	Research Focus	Key Findings
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She (2017)	Sindujoyo Gresik	Exploration of the influence of location and price on purchasing decisions for genderuwo rice	Price shows a positive and significant contribution to purchasing decisions.
Alfiah & Muflikha (2025)	Prigen District	Analysis of the impact of price and halal labels on consumer purchasing decisions for Samyang noodle products	Price has been shown to have a positive and significant influence on consumer purchasing decisions.
Harahap. (2018)	University of North Sumatra Medan	Evaluation of the role of price, product quality, and promotional strategy on the purchase of Mie Sedap instant noodles	The price variable influences purchasing decisions positively and significantly.
<i>Agustina et al..</i> (2018)	Gunung Kidul Housing	The influence of product quality, brand image, and price on purchasing decisions	Price has a significant partial contribution in forming purchasing decisions.
Zhavira & Santoso (2025)	STIESIA	The influence of price, location, and service quality on purchasing decisions for Tarim Kebuli rice	Price has a positive and significant influence on purchasing decisions.
Believers (2024)	Gresik Regency	Identification of determinant factors of consumer decisions in purchasing Nasi Krawu Habbah Sufa	Price has a significant role in mediating consumer purchasing decisions.
Asih (2025)	Young	Assessment of the influence of price, healthy lifestyle, and Islamic business ethics on purchasing decisions for corn rice	Price contributes to the formation of purchasing decisions.

Muhtaromet <i>al.</i> (2023)	Lamongan City	Analysis of product quality, price, service quality and location on purchasing decisions mediated by customer decisions on Lamongan's typical food.	Price has a positive but insignificant effect on purchasing decisions.
Kurniawan & Prihatini (2018)	Semarang	Analysis of the influence of price and product quality on purchasing decisions for Sari Roti products	Price contributes positively to purchasing decisions.
Full moon <i>et al.</i> (2025)	Cianjur	The influence of price, location, and promotion <i>word of mouth</i> on consumer purchasing decisions	Price has a positive influence on purchasing decisions.

Based on the literature reviewed, it can be concluded that price consistently plays a key role in driving purchasing decisions, particularly for food and beverage products, with a stronger role for low-income consumers such as students. Most studies demonstrate that price is a key consideration in consumer purchasing decisions, as it is perceived to enhance consumer value perception and drive purchase intentions. For example, a study of customers at the Korean restaurant Bum Kitchen found that price positively and significantly influenced consumer purchasing decisions, along with product quality and location (Fendi & Wibowo, 2022), while a study of snack food MSMEs in Jatibening also demonstrated that price positively influenced consumer purchasing decisions (Kamil *et al.*, 2025). Similar results were reported in a study of the coffee shop industry, indicating that price significantly influenced consumer purchasing decisions (Fatih *et al.*, 2023). However, some studies have shown that the influence of price can diminish if other factors, such as product quality, are more dominant (Chusnah & Fitriansyah, 2023), emphasizing the importance of contextual analysis of interactions between variables in consumer behavior studies.

Various previous studies in the field of marketing, particularly in the food and beverage sector, consistently place price as one of the main variables influencing consumer behavior and purchasing decisions. In addition to the findings described previously, a number of previous studies also show consistent results regarding the important role of price in influencing consumer purchasing decisions. For example, research by Danny Kurniawan and Prihatini (2018) proves that price has a positive effect on purchasing decisions for Sari Roti products; Mukminatin (2024) found that price plays a crucial role in influencing purchasing decisions for Habbah Sufa krawu rice; Harahap (2018) shows that price has a positive and significant effect on purchasing decisions for Mie Sedap; and Agustina *et al.* (2018) concluded that price partially had a significant influence on the decision to purchase Aloha bread.

Theoretically, these findings can strengthen the view of consumer behavior theory, which asserts that price is a crucial factor in the purchase evaluation process, where consumers tend to choose products with prices that provide the best perceived value compared to other alternatives (Kotler & Keller, 2022). Therefore, pricing needs to consider

the balance between perceived benefits and consumer purchasing power (Putra & Hariani, 2024). Furthermore, this literature emphasizes that price functions not only as an economic attribute but also as a signal of quality and psychological value for consumers. Prices perceived as commensurate with the benefits and quality of a product can increase consumer initial satisfaction and positively influence purchasing decisions. This aligns with the findings of Zahroh and Darmawan (2025), who stated that price is an important factor considered by consumers in determining purchasing decisions, especially when the price is perceived as commensurate with the quality and variety of the product offered. The practical implications of this research are that businesses, especially in the food and beverage sector, need to consider pricing strategies that align with consumers' perceived value, as prices that are too high or disproportionate to quality can reduce purchase intentions. Pricing is often associated with various aspects of business relationships and agreements, requiring clarity and transparency to avoid an imbalance of interests between the parties involved (Putra & Wibowo, 2023). In the decision-making process, ethical and responsible aspects of business activities are also important for business actors to consider (Mardikaningsih & Darmawan, 2022; Putra et al., 2022). Pricing strategies that are too high or do not align with quality can potentially reduce purchase intentions, while competitive pricing can attract new customers, maintain customer loyalty, and strengthen a product's position in a competitive market. In addition to price, consumer risk perception and trust levels can also influence loyalty to a product (Arifin et al., 2023). In some circumstances, consumers' perceived risk can also influence their intention to purchase a product (Cahyani & Darmawan, 2025). From a marketing policy perspective, these findings can be used as a basis for recommendations for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to consider price as a core variable in the marketing mix that is tailored to the target market and consumer purchasing power.

4. COVER

Based on the results of the literature review, it can be concluded that affordable prices play a significant role in influencing students' purchasing decisions regarding fast food around campus. Students, as a consumer group with limited purchasing power, tend to prioritize price when choosing daily meals. Affordable fast-food prices are perceived as providing value that meets students' needs, both in terms of benefits, practicality, and cost efficiency.

Thus, we conclude that affordable pricing not only serves as a purchasing incentive but also serves as a business sustainability strategy for fast food vendors around campus. This research is expected to contribute theoretically to the study of consumer behavior and serve as a practical reference for small businesses in formulating appropriate pricing strategies tailored to the characteristics of the student market.

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